

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a complete listing of the claims, and replaces all earlier version and listings.

1. (currently amended) A signature processing method for displaying a signature on a display unit, comprising:

~~a determining step, of determining whether a predetermined condition is satisfied;~~

an inputting step, of inputting a signature handwritten by a user via a digitizer, the signature being composed of at least one stroke; and

~~a control step, of displaying, when it is determined that the predetermined condition is satisfied,~~ the signature being inputted via the digitizer on the display unit in a manner that makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature, while the signature is inputted via the digitizer in said inputting step.

2. (currently amended) A signature processing method according to Claim 1, further comprising a determining step, of determining whether wherein the predetermined condition comprises the existence of an instruction is given by [[a]] the user to display the stroke of the signature in a manner such that it is difficult for the others to discern the stroke of the signature in a manner that it is difficult for the others to discern the stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature.

wherein said control step is executed in response to a determination in said determining step that the instruction is given.

and wherein said control step includes displaying, in a normal fashion, the stroke of the signature being inputted via the digitizer on the display unit when it is determined in said determining step that the instruction is not given.

3. (currently amended) A signature processing method ~~according to Claim 1;~~ for displaying a signature on a display unit, comprising:

a registering step, of registering a signature handwritten by a user via a digitizer, the signature being composed of at least one stroke which is inputted by a user via a digitizer;

a determining step, of determining whether an instruction is given by the user to display the stroke of the signature registered in said registering step ~~wherein the predetermined condition comprises the failure of a~~ when the user fails ~~to remember a registered signature; and~~

a control step, of displaying the stroke of the signature registered in said registering step on the display unit in a manner that makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature when it is determined in said determining step that the instruction is given thereof.

4. (currently amended) A signature processing method according to Claim 1, ~~wherein, when it is determined that the predetermined condition is satisfied, said control~~

step includes displaying the stroke of the signature by using a combination of the color background and a color of the stroke of the signature, of a display region of the display unit for displaying the signature of the color of the signature, which makes it the combination being such as to make it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature is used.

5. (currently amended) A signature processing method according to Claim 1, wherein, ~~when it is determined that the predetermined condition is satisfied, said control~~ step includes displaying the stroke of the signature with an image pattern of the background in a manner that makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature is displayed on a display region of the display unit for displaying the signature.

6. (currently amended) A signature processing method according to Claim 1, wherein, ~~when it is determined that the predetermined condition is satisfied, said control~~ step includes displaying the stroke of the signature is displayed in as broken lines in a manner that makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature..

7. (currently amended) A signature processing method according to Claim 1, wherein, ~~when it is determined that the predetermined condition is satisfied, said control~~ step includes displaying only a portion of the stroke of the input signature is displayed in a manner that makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature.

8. (currently amended) A signature processing method according to Claim 7, wherein the portion of the stroke the input signature ~~includes~~ is a portion of the stroke input within a predetermined period of time before ~~[[the]]~~ a current input stroke time.

9. (currently amended) A signature processing method according to Claim 1, wherein, ~~when it is determined that the predetermined condition is satisfied,~~ said control step includes displaying the stroke of the signature ~~is displayed~~ in a flashing manner.

10. (currently amended) A signature processing method according to Claim 1, wherein the stroke of the signature comprises coordinate data which is input via the digitizer ~~using a coordinate input unit~~.

11. - 31. (canceled)

32. (new) A signature processing apparatus for displaying a signature on a display unit, comprising:

inputting means for inputting a signature handwritten by a user via a digitizer, the signature being composed of at least one stroke; and

control means for displaying the signature being inputted via the digitizer on the display unit in a manner that makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature, while the signature is inputted via the digitizer by said inputting means.

33. (new) A signature processing apparatus according to Claim 32, further comprising determining means for determining whether an instruction is given by the user to display the stroke of the signature in a manner such that it is difficult for the others to discern the stroke of the signature in a manner that it is difficult for the others to discern the stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature,

wherein said control means operates in response to a determination by said determining means that the instruction is given,

and wherein said control means displays, in a normal fashion, the stroke of the signature being inputted via the digitizer on the display unit when it is determined by said determining means that the instruction is not given.

34. (new) A signature processing apparatus for displaying a signature on a display unit, comprising:

registering means for registering a signature handwritten by a user via a digitizer, the signature being composed of at least one stroke which is inputted by a user via a digitizer;

determining means for determining whether an instruction is given by the user to display the stroke of the signature registered by said registering means when the user fails to remember a registered signature; and

control means for displaying the stroke of the signature registered by said registering means on the display unit in a manner that makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the

stroke of the signature when it is determined by said determining means that the instruction is given.

35. (new) A signature processing apparatus according to Claim 32, wherein said control means displays the stroke of the signature by using a combination of the color background and a color of the stroke of the signature, the combination being such as to make it difficult to discern the stroke of the signature.

36. (new) A signature processing apparatus according to Claim 32, wherein said control means displays the stroke of the signature with an image pattern of the background in a manner that makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature.

37. (new) A signature processing apparatus according to Claim 32, wherein said control means displays the stroke of the signature as broken lines in a manner that makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature.

38. (new) A signature processing apparatus according to Claim 32, wherein said control means displays only a portion of the stroke of the signature in a manner that makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature.

39. (new) A signature processing apparatus according to Claim 38, wherein the portion of the stroke the signature is a portion of the stroke input within a predetermined period of time before a current input stroke time.

40. (new) A signature processing apparatus according to Claim 32, wherein said control means displays the stroke of the signature in a flashing manner.

41. (new) A signature processing apparatus according to Claim 32, wherein the stroke of the signature comprises coordinate data which is input via the digitizer.

42. (new) A signature processing program for displaying a signature on a display unit, comprising:

an inputting step, of inputting a signature handwritten by a user via a digitizer, the signature being composed of at least one stroke; and

a control step, of displaying the signature being inputted via the digitizer on the display unit in a manner that makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature, while the signature is inputted via the digitizer in said inputting step.

43. (new) A signature processing program according to Claim 42, further comprising a determining step, of determining whether an instruction is given by the user to display the stroke of the signature in a manner such that it is difficult for the others to discern the stroke of the signature in a manner that it is difficult for the others to discern the

stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature,

wherein said control step is executed in response to a determination in said determining step that the instruction is given,

and wherein said control step includes displaying, in a normal fashion, the stroke of the signature being inputted via the digitizer on the display unit when it is determined in said determining step that the instruction is not given.

44. (new) A signature processing program for displaying a signature on a display unit, comprising:

a registering step, of registering a signature handwritten by a user via a digitizer, the signature being composed of at least one stroke which is inputted by a user via a digitizer;

a determining step, of determining whether an instruction is given by the user to display the stroke of the signature registered in said registering step when the user fails to remember a registered signature; and

a control step, of displaying the stroke of the signature registered in said registering step on the display unit in a manner that makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature when it is determined said determining step that the instruction is given.

45. (new) A signature processing program according to Claim 42, wherein said control step includes displaying the stroke of the signature by using a combination of



the color background and a color of the stroke of the signature, the combination being such as to make it difficult to discern the stroke of the signature.

46. (new) A signature processing program according to Claim 42, wherein said control step includes displaying the stroke of the signature with an image pattern of the background in a manner that makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature.

47. (new) A signature processing program according to Claim 42, wherein said control step includes displaying the stroke of the signature as broken lines in a manner that makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature.

48. (new) A signature processing program according to Claim 42, wherein said control step includes displaying only a portion of the stroke of the signature in a manner that makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature.

49. (new) A signature processing program according to Claim 48, wherein the portion of the stroke the signature is a portion of the stroke input within a predetermined period of time before a current input stroke time.

50. (new) A signature processing program according to Claim 42, wherein said control step includes displaying the stroke of the signature in a flashing manner.

51. (new) A signature processing program according to Claim 42, wherein the stroke of the signature comprises coordinate data which is input via the digitizer.

52. (new) A computer-readable storage medium storing a signature processing program, the program comprising:

an inputting step, of inputting a signature handwritten by a user via a digitizer, the signature being composed of at least one stroke; and

a control step, of displaying the signature being inputted via the digitizer on the display unit in a manner that makes it difficult for others to discern the stroke of the signature and that makes it possible for the user to discern the stroke of the signature, while the signature is inputted via the digitizer in said inputting step.